



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Red River of the North Basin: Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Manitoba



Oslo, Minn., in the foreground, is an island in a sea of floodwaters as the Red River of the North spills over its banks.

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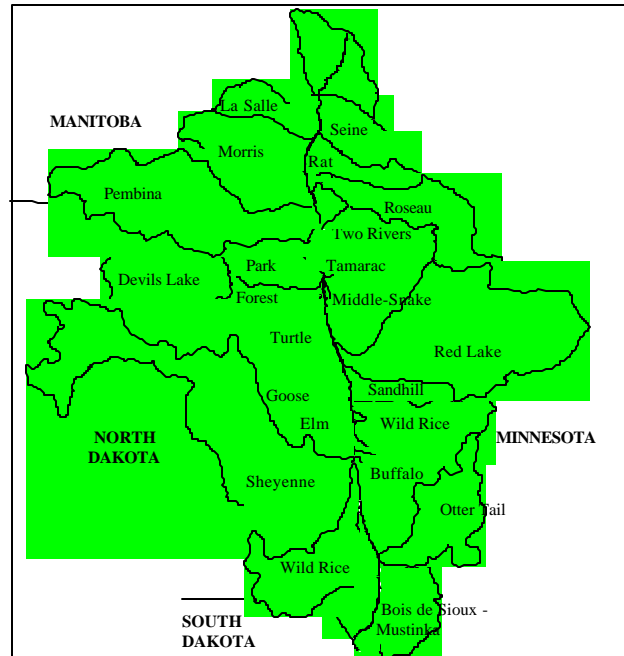
Location/Description

The Red River of the North basin encompasses parts of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Manitoba, Canada. Tributary watersheds (see location map in next column) covers 48,490 square miles. The watersheds include the Devils Lake subbasin, which at present is hydrologically isolated, and exclude the Assiniboine River subbasin. The Red River main stem originates at the confluence of the Ottertail and Bois de Sioux Rivers in the communities of Breckenridge, Minn., and Wahpeton, N.D., and ends at Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada. The basin's tributaries typically have relatively steep upper reaches that spill into the very flat main stem valley floor located in the lakebed of the former glacial Lake Agassiz.

Status

Endorsement from an array of Federal and state agencies, basinwide organizations, watershed districts and environmental organizations resulted in fiscal year (FY) 2001 funding for the reconnaissance study. In January and March 2001, informational/organizational meetings with Federal and non-Federal stakeholders fleshed out the proposed reconnaissance study framework and process. In April 2001, the Umbrella Coordination Team (UCT) convened to provide study overview and guide the proposed basinwide/mainstem feasibility study. The Fargo-Moorhead-and-upstream subbasin scoping team was formed in June 2001 to steer that subbasin's proposed spin-off feasibility study. The Wild Rice (Minnesota) Watershed District's Project Team was recruited to serve as scoping team for that subbasin's proposed feasibility study. The reconnaissance report analysis will be finalized and forwarded to Corps' Headquarters and the

Mississippi River Division in September 2001 asking approval to proceed to the feasibility study phase.



Authority

A Sept. 30, 1974, Resolution of the Senate Committee on Public Works, asked the Corps to determine whether report recommendations "on the Red River of the North Drainage Basin, Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota ... should be modified at this time, with particular reference to flood control, water supply, waste water management and allied purposes." \$200,000 in funding for a federally funded reconnaissance study was provided in the fiscal year 2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill.

Fiscal

The reconnaissance study will be the genesis for follow-up, 50%/50% cost-shared feasibility studies. The goal of these feasibility studies is to generate a basinwide implementation strategy for projects that meet the basin's water resource needs and opportunities. A basinwide/mainstem feasibility study will provide a comprehensive, holistic, 'big picture' perspective of the basin's water-related problems, issues, needs, and opportunities and provide a blueprint for a series of feasibility studies covering individual tributary subbasins or groups of subbasins. The St. Paul District proposes to lead off with three feasibility studies – basinwide/mainstem, Fargo-Moorhead and upstream subbasin, and Wild Rice (Minnesota) subbasin. These 2- to 3-year studies will proceed after Project Management Plans (PMPs), i.e., plans of study, are developed by the Corps and non-Federal sponsors early in FY 2002. The District proposes to initiate one or two additional subbasin feasibility studies each subsequent fiscal year through FY 2006 as Federal and non-Federal funding and resources allow. The parent Red River Reconnaissance Study will continue to be the vehicle for PMP development over that period.